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By-Rodriguez, Armando
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The problem encountered by Mexican Americans in finding and obtaining sources of financial aid to enter and continue in higher education is reviewed. Financial assistance provided by the Federal Government is described and discussed. Programs such as Talent Search, Upward Bound, Educational Opportunity Grants Program, National Defense Student Loan Program, and the College Work-Study Program are emphasized. Additional programs pointed out include Guaranteed Loans, Teacher Corps, High School Equivalency Program (HEP), and the High Potential Program. Eight scholarships designed specifically for Spanish-speaking students and 4 national organizations of Mexican Americans also offering scholarships are listed, along with addresses for obtaining information. Related documents are RC 003 429, RC 003 431, RC 003 433, and RC 003 436. (SW)

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FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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by

Armando Rodriguez

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Armando Rodriguez

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FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Armando Rodriguez*

The Mexican American college-potential student faces a number of obstacles in his movement along the path to college. In far too many cases he comes from a family environment where little or no stress is placed on the value of a college education. Not only is the family not college oriented, but often there is a very low level of participation by the parents in the activities of the student in any aspect of his schooling. This is not to say that the parents do not recognize education as an important asset for their children, but they do not understand how they can fit into the educational career of their children. The school system is bewildering and frustrating. The result is that many Mexican American students are on their own in competing for consideration and assistance in using the resources of the school for college entrance.

The second block is the general inability of high school counselors to become a vital part of the higher education goals of the Chicano student. Unfortunately still today the trend in too many high schools is to direct the Mexican American student into the vocational and high school terminal programs. Even in high schools where a specific office is set up to work with college-bound students, far too little time and effort is devoted to the recruitment and positive encouragement of the Chicano to get into the fight for scholarship and grant programs for college assistance. Part of this neglect can be attributed to the attitude of counselors but an additional part can be directed toward the glaring absence of scholarship and grant programs in which the recipient is designated as Mexican American. Such absence places the Chicano at

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* Chief, Mexican American Affairs Unit, U. S. Office of Education

considerable disadvantage in both the attention of the counselor and in visible recognition as an important segment of the educationally needy student body.

The situation of the Mexican American brightens only a little if he succeeds in surmounting those first two obstacles. He is still faced with a substantial problem in finding sources of finance to support him during those first two critical years at college.

He finds there is no coordinated program within the community for seeking out financial assistance for him. There is no National Scholarship and Service Foundation for the Mexican American as there is for the Negro. He has no central point he can turn to for determining what resources are available that he might tap. He also finds there is no coordinated program which brings together the high school counselor, the college admission and financial people in a selective effort to recruit him, to help him on the campus, and to give him support and encouragement when his resources are insufficient. Whether such a program will grow out of the concerted efforts of many Mexican American groups moving rapidly in joint efforts, or through a determined effort by high school and college to meet this need is not important, but there must be special attention given to this tremendous need.

The financial assistance that the federal government can bring to bear on the needs of the Mexican American begins with the Talent Search program administered by the Office of Education. Its basic purpose is to identify and encourage promising students to complete high school and enter college. Its legislative basis is Higher Education Act of 1965, Title IV-A. With a program level of $4,000,000, its scope, like many financial programs, is severely limited. The real strength of this program is that public and nonprofit organizations from the community can operate such programs. This provides a real opportunity for the community to get directly involved in developing an active concern

with an operating structure in college and high school educational recruitment and retention. As with many such programs the initiative of the community must be stimulated to create a project and put it into operation.

The second program with promise of real impact is Upward Bound. This is a tutoring program designed to bring college potentials to the college campus for a summer session prior to the regular session. This program has been operated by OEO, but will move soon into the Division of Financial Aid of the Office of Education. The determination of the present administration to center almost all student aid programs in one area provides an excellent opportunity for the creation of multi-funding projects designed to assist the student from the end of his high school career through a graduate program.

Probably the three most frequently used programs for student assistance are: the Educational Opportunity Grants Program (EOG), the National Defense Student Loan Program, and the College Work-Study Program.

The Educational Opportunity Grants Program is for students of exceptional financial need who without this grant would be unable to continue their education. Grants of up to $1,000 a year are available for four years of undergraduate study; and if the student is selected for an EOG, he will also receive additional financial aid at least equal to the EOG amount. The financial aid officer at the school selects those who will receive grant and determines the amount needed.

The EOG program has a funding level of $133,786,000 for the current fiscal year. This program has two obvious weaknesses. First, the amount available is woefully insufficient. Second, the granting procedures often result in a struggle between minority groups. If the granting officer is black, often the majority of grants go to the black students. The opposite is true if the granting officer is a Chicano.

Unfortunately, the result is that the program, originally designed to bring benefits to students and to colleges, creates an environment that raises tensions among competing individual and groups.

The National Defense Student Loan Program makes it possible for the student to borrow up to $1,000 each year to a total of $5,000 for undergraduate study and up to $2,500 a year for graduate or professional study, to a combined total of $10,000 for both graduate and undergraduate study. As in the EOG program, the financial aid officer of the college is responsible for determining which students are eligible and the amount of the loan. Repayment begins nine months after the student ceases at least half-time study and may extend over a ten-year period. Interest charges of three per cent also begin at the start of repayment period. Certain amounts may be cancelled if the student serves in the Armed Forces, Peace Corps, Vista or goes into teaching.

The College Work-Study Program may assist the student by providing a job opportunity for the college itself or for a public or private non-profit agency--such as a school, a social agency, or a hospital--working in cooperation with the school. The student may work an average of 15 hours weekly while classes are in session and 40 hours per week during the summer or other vacation periods. As with the other two programs, the financial aid officer of the college is responsible for determining which students are to be employed, selecting suitable jobs for them, handling the payroll, and the general administration of the program.

In each of the three programs described the student must be enrolled in the college before being eligible for assistance. One of the weaknesses of these programs is that there is great disparity from institution to institution based on the policy of the institution or the demands on the resources of the program at the particular institution.

Also in many institutions support may be available for one period and withdrawn the next period.

An additional support program administered by the Federal government is the Guaranteed Loans for College Students. This enables the student to secure a loan applicant statement from the college certifying his enrollment and his annual educational expenses. The student then negotiates a loan with an eligible lending institution of his own choice. The loan, if granted, may be guaranteed by a state or private nonprofit agency (it may be the college itself), which receives Federal money toward establishing a guarantee fund. A student may borrow for each year up to $1,000 for undergraduate study and up to $1,500 for graduate study. A graduated interest and repayment program is set up based on the student's adjusted family income. The program is designed for students from middle and upper income families. Some deferment in payment may be arranged if the student serves in the Armed Forces or Peace Corps.

A similar guaranteed loan program is available for students preparing for ocations at the post-secondary school level. To be eligible students are not required to have graduated from high school, but must be able to benefit from the course of instruction. They may borrow a maximum of at least $1,000 a year for two years, with the exact limit varying from state to state. The repayment period may cover from three to six years, and other provisions are similar to those for Guaranteed Loans which apply to college students.

A program which should be brought to the attention of students who have finished their undergraduate program is the Teacher Corps. This program is a two-year graduate program designed to provide the participant with a Master's Degree and a credential for teaching in the state where the Intern gets his degree. The program provides to each intern tuition and $75.00 a week, plus $15.00 for each dependent. During the past year a number of Teacher Corps projects have been set up in the

Southwest with emphasis on recruiting the Mexican American.

Two programs that offer assistance to Mexican American students who have not finished high school are the HEP (High School Equivalency Program) and High Potential Program. HEP takes girls and boys who have dropped out of school and are from the migrant stream and places them in schools on college campuses while they work for their high school diploma. The program includes counseling and assistance to enable them to determine what educational or vocational path they wish to follow when they leave the program. The location of the program on a college campus has been a big help in encouraging many of the students to continue on at the college level. Information about the HEP can be obtained by contacting the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, D. C.

The high Potential Program with its many variations is a university-supported program to bring to the campus students who have not finished school, have often been deeply involved with the law, and still offer a potential for obtaining a college education. The program is a full ride for each student with an intensive continuous counseling program to insure the highest possible success for each student. Most California colleges have such programs and information can be obtained from them on the details of their program.

A new program operating with Federal funding is the Special Services Program of the Office of Education. The program is so new that the guidelines for its operation are still incomplete. The program has a $10,000,000 funding level for the current year and is designed to give a full financial ride to deserving students from the Talent Search level through graduate level. The first year will be devoted to a number of pilot projects located at designated university centers throughout the country. This program will be coordinated with existing financial aid programs of the Federal government and will be centered in the Division of Student Financial Aid of the Office of Education. Details on this program should be

available within the next three months.

There are a number of scholarships available for Spanish Speaking Students:

A. University of Denver, Denver, Colorado.

Funds are available for the training of Spanish Speaking Americans for legal careers. Funds are provided by the Ford Foundation.

Write: Office of Student Aid
University of Denver
Denver, Colorado 80210

B. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Reverend Uvaldo Martinez Memorial Scholarship is available to Spanish-Speaking students who desire to enter Public Health Nursing in New Mexico, need financial assistance, and show creditable scholarship.

Write: Student Aids Office
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

C. John Hay Whitney Foundation.

Approximately 30 Opportunity Fellowships for graduate study and for apprenticeships in agriculture, industry or labor: primarily in the U. S. but may be used abroad; stipends range normally from $1,000 to $3,000 for one year; open to U. S. citizens of superior promise with racial and cultural backgrounds or regions of original residence as follows: Negroes, Spanish-Americans, American Indians, residents of Guam, Puerto Rico, Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and the Trust Territories.

Write: John Hay Whitney Foundation
111 West 50th Street
New York, New York 10020

D. United Scholarship Service, Inc.

One hundred scholarships are available for students of Spanish-American or American Indian ancestry for undergraduate study in any regionally accredited college or university. The amount of the scholarship varies with the need of the student.

Write: Field Director
United Scholarship Service, Inc.
1452 Pennsylvania Street
Denver, Colorado 80203

E. The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.

One scholarship of $750 will be offered each year to a native Spanish-Speaker based on the results of the A.A.T.S.P. National Spanish Contest.

Write: Mr. Harry T. Charly
Chairman of National High School Spanish Contest
A.A.T.S.P.
1810 Chadbourne Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

F. Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, California.

One $900 scholarship each year for a native Spanish-Speaker.

Write: Student Financial Aid
Mount St. Mary's College
12001 Chalon Road
Los Angeles, California 90049

G. Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica (SHH)

One Future Teacher Award each year for $500 for a graduating senior who intends to become a teacher of Spanish.

Write: Professor Richard B. Klein
Box 123
Urbana, Illinois 61801

H. New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico

The Fabian Garcia Memorial Fund Awards thirty scholarships in the amount of $90 to be applied toward dormitory rent in Garcia Hall. First preference given to boys of Spanish descent.

Write: Financial Aids Office
New Mexico State University
Box 3549
University Park Branch
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001

In addition to the specific scholarships above, many of the national organizations of Mexican Americans provide scholarships either through their national office or through the local chapter. While these aids may not be large they will give sufficient assistance to many students to enable them to consider college enrollment. These organizations are:

League of United Latin American Clubs
2320 LaBranch Street Room 261
Houston, Texas 77004

Comuunity Service Organization
3642 Vista Deal Valle
San Jose, California 95132

Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations
1631 Latexo Drive
Houston, Texas 77108

American G. I. Forum
621 Gabaldon Road
Albuquerque, New Mexico

For additional copies and information:

Dr. Mayer J. Franklin
School of Education
California State College
Long Beach, California 90801